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Appl. No. 10/539,895
Reply to Office Action of March 28, 2008
Attorney Docket 18064

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims:

1. (currently amended) In a road grader having a rear frame including left and right longitudinal beams, each having a rear end, and providing for the components or subassemblies of a rear counterweight, lights and a bumper, the improvement comprising:

the bumper and the rear counterweight are comprised of a generally flat elongate rear end plate having opposing outer end regions and extending across the entire width of the grader;

~~any and the rear end plate exhibits a small wall thickness in use with a rear mounted~~
generally maintained;

the rear end plate viewed in the direction of travel of the grader constitutes the rearmost part of the rear frame; and

backup/brake and flasher lights are built into openings in the rear end plate positioned in the outer end regions.

2. (original) The improvement of claim 1, wherein:
the rear end plate is formed as one piece.

3. (original) The improvement of claim 2, wherein:
the rear ends of the left longitudinal beam and the right longitudinal beam are joined to a rear transverse beam.

4. (original) The improvement of claim 3, wherein:
the rear end plate is removably attached to the rear transverse beam.

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5. (original) The improvement of claim 1, wherein:
the rear ends of the left longitudinal beam and the right longitudinal beam are joined to a rear transverse beam.
6. (original) The improvement of claim 2, wherein:
the rear ends of the left longitudinal beam and the right longitudinal beam are joined to a rear transverse beam.
7. (original) The improvement of claim 3, wherein:
the rear end plate is removably attached to the rear transverse beam.
8. (currently amended) A road grader comprising:
a wheel-supported main frame having a front end and an opposing rear end as determined by the normal direction of travel, the main frame comprised of joined front and rear frames;
an engine and a driver's cab supported on said main frame;
a vertically adjustable ground-engaging blade supported by said main frame;
the rear frame having left and right longitudinal beams generally parallel and in the general same horizontal plane, each with a rear end;
a generally flat elongate rear end plate jointed to the rear end of each of the right and left longitudinal beams; the rear end plate constituting the rearmost part of the rear frame and extending generally the width of the road grader;
the rear end plate having openings therethrough to ~~accommodate the attachment of~~ allow rear-mounted equipment to pass through the rear end plate.
9. (original) The road grader of claim 8, wherein:
the rear end plate is formed as one piece.
10. (original) The road grader of claim 9, wherein:
the rear end plate is removably attached to the rear transverse beam.
11. (original) The road grader of claim 8, wherein:

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the rear end plate has opposing outer end portions and openings through the outer end portions and backup/brake and flasher lights are fitted therein.

12. (original) The road grader of claim 11, wherein:
the rear end plate is made of heavy gauge steel.

13. (new) The road grader of claim 8, wherein:
the rear end plate exhibits a small wall thickness in use with a rear-mounted piece of equipment of a high weight or the rear end plate exhibits a greater wall thickness in use with a rear-mounted piece of equipment of a low weight or without any rear-mounted equipment to achieve an improved axle load distribution.